

TRAINED DOGS GUIDE THE BLIND  
Henderson, Rose

H/67704

H  
67704



**M.C. MIGEL LIBRARY  
AMERICAN PRINTING  
HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**





IN 1928, MORRIS FRANK, WHO HAD BEEN BLIND FOR FOUR YEARS, WENT TO FORTUNATE FIELDS IN SWITZERLAND AND BROUGHT BACK BUDDY, HIS OLD GUIDE. HE HAS SINCE DEVOTED HIMSELF ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO HELPING OTHER BLIND PERSONS THROUGH THE FACILITIES OF THE SEEING EYE.

# Trained Dogs Guide the Blind

By  
ROSE  
HENDERSON



MRS. HARRISON EUSTIS MOVED HER SHEPHERD DOGS FROM FORTUNATE FIELDS TO MORRISTOWN, N. J., WHERE WITH MORRIS FRANK SHE FOUNDED THE SEEING EYE, CONCENTRATING IN AMERICA THIS WORK OF EXPERIMENT AND SERVICE.

AT CROSWOOD STREET CROSSINGS THE DOG WATCHES THE TRAFFIC ALERTLY, AND ONLY WHEN THE WAY IS CLEAR DOES SHE VENTURE ACROSS.



**W**HILE the number of persons born blind has been decreased by better living conditions and medical care, blindness caused by accidents is on the increase, and the need for aiding the sightless has grown with the increasing complexity of the modern world. Every possible measure to overcome the mental and physical depression caused by this handicap is welcomed in order that blind persons may be enabled to make the best use of their remaining faculties. A unique school for helping the blind is the "Seeing Eye," located at a country estate near Morristown, N. J. Here dogs are trained to serve as guides for blind masters who in turn are taught how to use the dogs.

Founded in 1929 by Mrs. Harrison Eustis and Morris Frank, a blind man, this center of rehabilitation and research has sent out more than 100 guides for as many blind persons who have been made happy and independent through the remarkable ability and guardianship of their trained canine friends. The blind person's greatest difficulty is in getting from place to place safely and independently. This the dog guide enables him to do.

The physical and mental health of the blind is benefited by the exercise of walking outdoors and by the feeling of freedom and self reliance which the presence of the dog makes possible.

Often a man or woman previously dependent may become self supporting. Friends and relatives are thereby relieved of much care and anxiety. The dog also makes friends for his blind master. It usually "means the beginning of a new life," according to one guide owner. The guide is a constant companion, devoted as only a dog can be to the welfare of an affectionate master.

German shepherds are the breed trained and used as guides. Females are preferable because they are gentle, more eager to please and less inclined than males to quarrel with other dogs. Each dog wears a leather harness around her chest and shoulders, and from this a stiff handle is extended to reach her master's hand, so that he can feel her every movement. The first thing she has learned is to obey. She has also learned to disobey if the occasion demands. Although the dog follows her master's directions of "left," "right" and "forward" she is continually on the lookout for danger, and she will not lead her charge where she thinks he may suffer harm. For example, if the master directs her toward an awning that is so low it will strike his head, she sits down to let him know that something is in the way. Then she detours around it, as she does around a pile of bricks or any other obstruction. At curbs and steps the



August 1935

of what particular thing she has done that helped the baby. Circumstances may have inspired a change of milk. Perhaps because the mother ceased her hopeless attempts to force milk, eggs or cereals on the child, the eczema disappeared. Boiled milk may have been introduced into the infant's diet, and the mother may be unaware that there was any connection between its inclusion and the child's freedom from the rash.

A temporary disappearance of the rash is not always indicative that one has found and removed the cause. One cannot say that the child is cured until sufficient time has elapsed to make this optimistic estimate valid.

While age contributes a greater ability to withstand food irritations, the increase in the variety of the older child's diet may add another complication. There is always the possibility that some new food may bring about a return of the rash. This should serve to warn the mother of an eczematous baby or child that new foods should be added to the diet in cautious rather than in generous amounts and that she must be on the alert for symptoms of distress.

As they develop, children are contending constantly with physical influences quite removed from diet. The teething period exerts some drain on the minerals of the system, and this temporary imbalance may aggravate an existing disposition toward the development of a rash.

In fact so commonplace is this phenomenon that there has come to be what is known to the layman as a "teething rash." A cutting down of the diet and the inclusion of cod liver oil in larger quantities should offset this tendency and end the rash.

The upheaval of the whole glandular system, especially of the thyroid gland at the adolescent period, may again increase the sensitivity of the skin. Eruptions and skin rashes are a familiar occurrence at this time. The child who had eczema in infancy might be a victim at this particular period.

Seasonal influences must also be considered. The use of woolen clothes, furs and blankets may cause a flare up of a supposedly cured case of eczema in the winter. In summer there may be a corresponding cessation of the rash because of the disuse of these fabrics, an increase in sun and a limitation in diet.

The hopefulness of eczema is that the child tends to outgrow it. The hopeless aspects appear when existing sensitivities are so numerous as to subject the child to their deleterious influences more or less throughout life. In that case the rash of eczema may disappear, but the child becomes the victim of other forms of allergy.

[NOTE.—This is the concluding article in the series, "Why the Baby Has Eczema." The first article appeared in the May issue. These excerpts are taken from material for a book to be called "When the Baby Has Eczema."]

## FOODS IN HOT WEATHER

(Continued from page 703)

Meat should not be washed or covered before being put into the refrigerator. Simply remove the paper wrapping and place the meat on an aluminum or nonrusting wire mat, to allow some air circulation on the under side; if this is not possible, the meat may be placed on a plate and turned over once a day, although it should not be kept in a raw state longer than a day. Ground meat spoils most readily. Cured meat keeps well, but mold will grow on the surface if it is too moist or covered too closely. Cooked meat keeps better than does raw meat, but too much reliance should not be placed on the cooking; refrigeration is tremendously important. Meat broth is the most favorable medium for the growth of bacteria, yeasts and molds; gelatin desserts spoil readily, and gravies or meat juices are subject to a most dangerous type of spoilage if they are not refrigerated, or if they are held too long.

Cooked potatoes spoil if they are kept warm and damp. To make fine potato salad, select potatoes with sufficiently low water content so that they may be boiled without becoming soggy. Turn them into a sieve or colander as soon as cooked, and let them cool completely. Then set the colander in the refrigerator until the pota-

atoes are completely cold and ready to cut into cubes. Cook fresh eggs in water just below the boiling point until they are tender. Put them in cold water until chilled before removing the shell and cutting them for salad. Mayonnaise, celery, fresh chopped onion and celery seeds may also be needed in the salad with lettuce for garnish. When mixing with a fork, avoid mashing any of the ingredients.

It is not generally known that bread and cake keep well in the refrigerator. This information is particularly useful on days when the kitchen humidity is exceedingly high. The bread or cake should be wrapped in wax-paper or some similar protective covering. Mold will grow on the surface of the bread or cake if the humidity is too high, but the food will dry out if the humidity is too low. If the humidity cannot be controlled in the refrigerator, then use your own judgment as to covering each food. In some refrigerators, salt and crackers stay in better condition than in the kitchen cupboard.

The housewife should remember that if there is the slightest question about the wholesomeness of food, it is far wiser and more economical to discard it than to endanger the health of the family by attempting to use it.

dog sits down close to the edges so that her master can find them readily with his foot or cane. At crowded street crossings the dog watches the traffic alertly, and only when the way is clear does she venture across. If a car comes toward her she slows up or stops, moving on when the way is again open.

Since a blind person usually has an adequate mental picture or map of the home town or community, all he needs is a guide to enable him to get about in this picture as he wishes. Many faithful dogs, not specially trained, have led their masters back and forth on one or two familiar routes, but only since the system of the Seeing Eye was evolved has a blind man been able to direct his dog anywhere he wants to go, over unfamiliar territory and around unexpected obstructions.

A letter from a man in Pennsylvania, written after he had had his dog fifteen months, indicates the amazing team work possible. His business is canvassing and operating candy machines that are located in mills and factories. He writes: "Gesa and I canvass about ten full squares a day, making from 300 to 350 calls. This involves the mastery of something like 1,500 stops daily, up and down, together with every conceivable variety of porches, stoops, side entrances, etc. In a day's work Gesa and I cover from 5 to 10 miles, depending on what part of the city our activities are confined to. This means a daily crossing of from forty to eighty main streets, as well as the intervening half streets and alleys. Five days of my week are taken up with canvassing when the weather permits; the sixth day is consumed by looking after thirty of my machines. These machines are scattered all over the city, in mills, factories, garages, office buildings, and so forth, on second floors, third floors, in basements, hallways, remote corners and what not, with every imaginable entrance and exit to be handled. On entering each building in which I have a location, I give Gesa the necessary commands,



HERE DOGS ARE TRAINED TO SERVE AS GUIDES FOR BLIND MASTERS WHO IN TURN ARE TAUGHT HOW TO USE THE DOGS.

and she leads me to the machine. Her custom is to stop in such a position that I can reach out and lay my hand on the machine. The routes I have mapped out cover about 10 miles each, and take me from six to seven hours to complete. On our trips we go through narrow and rough alleys, up rickety stairways, over trolley tracks and railroads, across the busiest thoroughfares and boulevards."

The work could not possibly be done without a guide, this man explains, and he could not afford a human guide. "No words could possibly express the value of Gesa to me," he declares.

Similar letters keep coming from others who have bought dogs at the Seeing Eye. A young man was enabled to go through college, taking part in practically every activity that his schoolmates enjoyed, with the exception of athletics. From the blackness of despair and loneliness the blind person is led to an interested, normal life through the intelligent and devoted service of the dog guide. Blind masters at the Seeing Eye are taught how to care for their dogs, how to treat minor ailments and when to call a veterinarian.

The dog's companionship alone means a great deal to the owner. One man says, "I felt as though I had been drowning and now had a life preserver, with dry land in sight. I got my nerves settled, walked off twenty pounds of surplus flesh, made friends and acquaintances by the hundreds. Through Hebe's devotion I learned not to be bitter at life, no matter what happens. At night she sleeps by my bedside, and if I happen to turn over I feel her big head peep up to see that all is well."

A frail little woman from California came to Morristown with her physical and mental health greatly impaired because of her tragic loss of eyesight. Soon after she got her dog her health improved in every way. She was so grateful and enthusiastic that she went about lecturing before women's clubs and other organizations about the Seeing Eye and was the means of hav-



THE DOG GUIDE HELPS HIS MASTER OVERCOME HIS GREATEST DIFFICULTY, THAT OF GETTING ABOUT SAFELY AND INDEPENDENTLY.



ing thirty-seven other blind persons in the various communities supplied with dog guides.

This work of dog-guide training got its start in America through a magazine article written by Mrs. Eustis in which she described what was being done in Germany by dogs that had been trained to guide the blind. For the past ten years she had been carrying on scientific experiments in the breeding of German shepherd dogs at Fortunate Fields, her estate above Vevey in Switzerland. Here she developed a patrol dog service for the Swiss state police, the Swiss customs and the Italian metropolitan police and for prisons in New York and Pennsylvania. She also developed the messenger dog service for the Swiss army and, most important of all, the service of guides for the blind.

Mr. Frank, who had been blind for four years, was at his home in Nashville, Tenn., when Mrs. Eustis' article was read to him by a friend. This was in 1928. He had attended Vanderbilt University and was devoting himself to problems of the blind. He at once got in touch with Mrs. Eustis and made the trip to Fortunate Fields where he secured Buddy, his dog guide, and was taught how to use her. Returning to America, he and Buddy made their way safely through the New York traffic. Buddy became his constant companion and has traveled more than 50,000 miles with him. Mr. Frank has since devoted himself enthusiastically to helping other blind persons through the Seeing Eye of which he is vice-president and Mrs. Eustis president.

Of the dogs she has done so much to develop, Mrs. Eustis says, "I want you to see the shepherd as I see him, as a Niagara of energy going to waste, as an intelligence waiting to be used intelligently, and as a public servant and useful citizen." Not long ago she moved her dogs from Fortunate Fields to Morristown, thus concentrating in America this fascinating unique work of experiment and service.

The greatest difficulty at the school is not in training the dogs but in securing adequate instructors. Every dog graduate must be efficient, and each blind master must be carefully taught to have absolute confidence in his dog. Instructors therefore have to understand dog psychology and possess the faculty of giving instruction to the dogs in a vital and effective way. Great tact and patience are required besides the ability to understand the point of view and limitations of the blind. Those who become head instructors must also be able to teach what they have learned. It takes from two to three years to develop a competent instructor and another two years to make a promising teacher into a head instructor.

The head of the research and scientific division of the Seeing Eye is Elliott S. Humphrey, a man with a gift for handling animals and a long and varied experience in animal breeding

and training. At Fortunate Fields he made an extensive study of the German shepherd and built up a tabulation of blood lines according to physical and mental qualities, such as exists nowhere else in the world. Through years of selection the dogs have reached an average of 95 per cent "teachability," or training temperament. It takes about three months to develop the dog as a guide, and approximately one month to teach a master how to use his dog. The dog's training is started at the age of 14 months, and her term of service is about ten years.

The blind masters must also be carefully chosen, as experience has shown that not all blind people can adapt themselves to dog guides. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 12,000 blind persons in the United States would be immensely benefited if they could be supplied with dogs.

According to Willi Ebeling, secretary and executive vice-president of the Seeing Eye, formerly a breeder of German shepherds, this breed has no wolf blood. They are natural working animals, bred for centuries to tend sheep. Mr. Ebeling explains that while the instinct of a terrier or a sporting dog is to hunt, the instinct of shepherds is to protect and serve man and his possessions. These dogs have a good all-weather coat; they are intelligent and large and strong, without being clumsy or too costly to maintain. Because of these various qualities, the sheep-herding dogs make the best guides. Mr. Ebeling has general supervision of all the work in America, including the follow-up of dogs and their owners after they leave the school.

A director of a state institution for the blind says, "I have kept in close touch with the work done by each of the dogs at the institution, and in every instance she has done much more than serve as a pair of eyes for her master. I do not know of a single case in which the faithful use of a dog guide by her owner has not resulted in certain physical changes, changes of attitude and improvement of morale, which are striking."

A supervisor of the blind says, "Only today a gentleman remarked to me that the dogs must be worth their weight in gold to their sightless owners. The dog cannot possibly be measured by the financial yard stick. To say that a guide dog is worth her weight in gold is the same as saying that one's eyes are worth their weight in gold."

The Seeing Eye provides a dog, including the master's training and maintenance at school headquarters, for less than the actual cost to the school of supplying the dogs. Such a loss to the school nevertheless acts as a protection to the blind, as it eliminates the possible establishment of commercial schools which might seek to exploit the blind.

HV1709

c. 3

H

Henderson, Rose  
Trained dogs guide the blind.

Date Due			

B-Dart INDUSTRIES

Los Angeles 25, Calif  
6 Ontario

